



## RC/PIO News & Notes |

May 8, 2026

A Weekly Update from **Eric Jens, Risk Communicator** – Georgia Department of Public Health

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### News & Notes

Today is the third of a three day BioWatch Full-Scale Exercise. We'll have some early highlights this week, and more in next week's edition. Also this week we'll feature the Region C Healthcare Coalition meeting, Children's Mental Health Day, and more.

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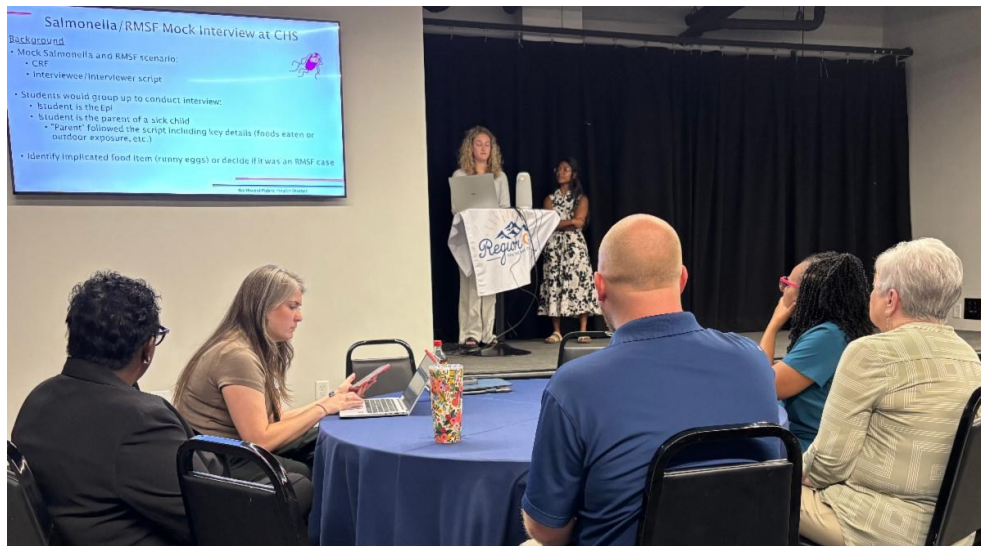
### BioWatch FSE

A Full Scale Exercise simulating a BioWatch Actionable Result (BAR) for Bacilli Anthracis (Anthrax) began Wednesday. Calls throughout the day simulated the sequence of information exchange that would occur if the scenario were a real event near a downtown Atlanta sports venue during a world wide sporting event of significance. The injects provided some realistic occurrences ranging from missing lab vials to dead rabbits, and from suspicious mosquito spraying trucks to misplaced stolen road signs. It provided a good opportunity to see how each discipline and agency works with others, including Communications and public messaging. A supplemental BioWatch risk communication drill is being planned for late summer.



## Region C meeting

The Region C Healthcare Coalition held a quarterly meeting Tuesday in Carrollton. Epidemiologists from DPH districts 1-1 and 4 reported on their latest activities and recent data trends. The group also heard about an incident at The Spires in which a suspicious and unauthorized individual made an appearance. This is Hurricane Preparedness week, and coalition members heard from Meteorologist David Nadler about how to prepare for the season that begins June 1. Brittany Holcomb provided the group with an overview of last month's full scale exercise at Georgia Highlands College that included 13 agencies responding to a simulated explosion incident.



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## TFAH Preparedness Report

The Trust for America's Health annual report was released yesterday. Georgia was among 17 states and the District of Columbia to be ranked in the middle tier based on ten measures of Public Health preparedness.

**NEW** TFAH *Ready or Not 2026: Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism Report*



Read the full report at: <https://bit.ly/3QOkkHM>

## Children's Mental Health Day

'Healthy Minds, Bright Futures,' was the theme to this year's Children's Mental Health Day held at Twin Towers. Kevin Tanner, Commissioner of Georgia Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities provided words of encouragement and cited numerous recent increases in investing support and resources for people throughout Georgia who are struggling at a challenging time in life. He said 350,000 calls to the 988 Crisis and Access Line were made by Georgians last year, and that he hears regularly from those who say their lives or the lives of someone they know, were saved by this resource. There were also a number of life-experience testimonials, and reports on the latest efforts by numerous agencies that support improved childhood times.



## Next Week Preview

More BioWatch exercise highlights are anticipated for next week. We should also have more information on exercise planning and preparing for FIFA World Cup which starts next month. On May 28 DPH Zoonotic Disease Epidemiologist Skyler Brennan is scheduled to speak on the Project ECHO: Thinking Ahead of the World Cup: Hantavirus session.

### About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication aimed at risk communicators and public information officers within Georgia's 18 public health districts. The goal of the communication is to increase preparedness through the exchange of information about significant events, training and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYUO or For Your Use Only. Please be judicious when forwarding. For questions, comments or to submit information for inclusion, contact Eric Jens at [Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov](mailto:Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov).

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